

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claims 1, 9, 10 and 14 and add new claim 21, as shown below. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A data store query system comprising:  
a data store that includes a collection of records;  
a constant-sized sorted result buffer; and  
a query interface operable to receive a limit and order query that includes both of an order criteria and a limit criteria, the limit criteria specifying a maximum number  $N$  of records for a result set of records satisfying the limit and order query, to fill the sorted result buffer with a first  $N$  number of records from the data store, to iteratively order the sorted result buffer based upon the order criteria, iteratively compare remaining records in the data store against a  $N$ th record in the sorted result buffer based upon the order criteria, to iteratively replace the  $N$ th record in the sorted result buffer with a remaining record in the data store based upon iteratively comparing remaining records in the data store against the  $N$ th record in the sorted result buffer, and to output the sorted result buffer as the result set of records.
2. (Original) The data store query system of claim 1 wherein the data store is a database or a fast cache.
3. (Previously Presented) The data store query system of claim 1  
wherein the collection of records further comprises a table having an attribute, and  
wherein the query interface is operable to receive the limit and order query placing order constraints on the attribute.

4. (Original) The data store query system of claim 1 wherein the query interface creates a revised sorted result buffer in response to a modification of the limit and order query, the modification being made during a pause in execution of the limit and order query.

5. (Original) The data store query system of claim 1 wherein the sorted result buffer is stored in random access memory.

6. (Original) The data store query system of claim 1 wherein the query interface is operable to receive the limit and order query formulated using standard query language (SQL).

7. (Original) The data store query system of claim 1 wherein the query interface is operable to receive the limit and order query that requests the first or last  $N$  records satisfying the query.

8. (Original) The data store query system of claim 1 wherein the query interface is operable to identify data in the data store that satisfies the limit and order query using the sorted result buffer by iteratively reformulating the limit and order query until the sorted result buffer contains data satisfying the limit and order query.

9. (Currently Amended) A method for satisfying limit and order queries including:  
receiving a limit and order query that includes both of an order criteria and a limit criteria, the limit criteria specifying a maximum number  $N$  of records for a result set of records satisfying the limit and order query;

filling a constant-sized sorted result buffer with a first  $N$  number of records from a data store;

iteratively ordering the sorted result buffer based upon the order criteria;

iteratively comparing remaining records in the data store against a  $N$ th record in the sorted result buffer based upon the order criteria;

iteratively replacing the  $N$ th record in the sorted result buffer with a remaining record in the data store based upon iteratively comparing remaining records in the data store against the  $N$ th record in the sorted result buffer; and

outputting the sorted result buffer as the result set of records.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9 wherein the limit and order query is formatted formulated using standard query language (SQL).

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein filling the sorted result buffer with the first  $N$  number of records from the data store includes:

scanning the data store without consideration of the order criteria to identify records otherwise satisfying the limit and order query; and

placing identified records into the sorted result buffer until the sorted result buffer includes the maximum number of records specified by the limit criteria.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein the limit and order query requests the first  $N$  records satisfying the order criteria.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein the limit and order query requests the last  $N$  records satisfying the order criteria.

14. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising a storage medium having instructions stored thereon, the instructions including:

a first code segment for receiving a limit and order query that includes both of an order criteria and a limit criteria, the limit criteria specifying a maximum number  $N$  of records for a result set of records satisfying the limit and order query;

a second code segment for filling a constant-sized sorted result buffer with a first  $N$  number of the set of data records from a data store;

a third code segment for iteratively ordering the sorted result buffer based upon the order criteria;

a fourth code segment for iteratively comparing remaining records in the data store against a  $M$ th record in the sorted result buffer based upon the order criteria;

a fifth code segment for iteratively replacing the  $N$ th record in the sorted result buffer with a remaining record in the data store based upon iteratively comparing remaining records in the data store against the  $N$ th record in the sorted result buffer; and

a sixth code segment for outputting the sorted result buffer as the result set of records.

15. to 20. (Cancelled)

21. (New) The data store query system of claim 1, wherein the size of the constant-sized sorted result buffer is based on the limit criteria.